A

REVIEW

OF THE

CONDUCT AND CHARACTER

OF THE LATE

Mr. Alexander Kilham,

Minister of the Gospel,

Particularly during the Time of his Exertions for the Attainment of a Reformation of Abuses, &c. amongst the People called Methodists. Intended as a Sequel to his Life, as extracted from his own Journal.

BY A FRIEND.

"*Mother of Tortures! persecuting Zeal,*
"*While she beneath the blasphemous pretence*
"*Of pleasing Parent Heav'n, the Source of Love!*
"*Has wrought more Horrors, more detested Deeds,*
"*Than all the rest combin'd.*"

THOMSON.

LEEDS:

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1800.

An ADDRESS

TO

Meſſrs. GRUNDELL and HALL.

RESPECTED BRETHREN!

I Have read over your late Life of Mr. KILHAM with conſiderable ſatisfaction, and hope it will be found of real advantage to the Methodiſt New Itinerancy, Chriſtianity, and the Vindication of the calumniated Character of a departed Friend.

At the firſt on-ſet I was rather inclined to think you had made too free with Mr. Killiam's Journal, but upon ſecond thoughts I have no doubt but it will be found the moſt excellent way. You have thereby prevented the charge of an undue partiality to our deceaſed Friend.—Beſides the major part of your readers muſt be pleaſed with extracts from his own records, and eſpecially in his own words. In my humble opinion, they place in the cleareſt point of view Mr. K——'s real goodneſs of heart; and bear the moſt convincing evidence, that the motives which regulated his conduct were upright and diſintereſted in the extreme.

I cannot forbear to pay my tribute of thanks for your admirable preface. The brief hiſtory which it conveys of Methodiſm, and the almoſt imperceptible introduction of grievances amongſt them, muſt convince every unprejudiced mind of the propriety of Mr. Kilham's conduct. He had long been acquainted with theſe latent evils; had carefully marked their progreſs; and trembling for the conſequences of a diviſion, laboured with might and main to have the *former* remedied, and the *latter* prevented. His efforts however proved ineffectual;—why they ſhould have been ſo, is a myſtery in the diſpenſations of Providence. *All things*, nevertheleſs, *work together for good.*

The ſketch of our late Friend's character at the concluſion of the life, nearly meets with my whole approbation.—I muſt own that you have been, if any thing, too honeſt.

The few darkiſh ſhades in the portrait hurt my feelings; they may be juſt—probably I reſpected him ſo much, that I was blinded to ſome of them; however they convince us, that the beſt of men are but men at the beſt. Permit me though, my Friends, to ſay, that a few pages more ſeem to be wanting to elucidate Mr. K———'s conduct in the latter part of his life. He has been repreſented as a man ambitious and aſpiring, determined upon a breach in the Methodiſt Connexion, by forming a party and becoming the head thereof. I am certain that thoſe who knew him the beſt will be the moſt ready to acquit him of ſuch deſires and intentions; but you muſt allow that all did not know him intimately, and poſterity can only know him from the character handed down: Hence the neceſſity, I think, (but ſubmit to your better judgment) of a few more pages.

Under this impreſſion, I have employed a few leiſure hours, and here is the reſult. 'Tis true, nothing can be brought forward, which can be deemed *new* by many of our readers; but this defect ſeems to be obviated in ſome meaſure, by its importance. And though much of the following pages may have been publiſhed before, yet the ſcattered fragments are well worth the preſerving. My whole deſire is (and I am perſuaded your's is the ſame) to render the injured man ſtrict juſtice. But I ſhall become tedious, therefore muſt conclude myſelf, with much reſpect,

Your ſincere FRIEND.

Leeds, 18th Jan. 1800.

To T. HANNAM, Leeds.

By requeſt of the Brethren to whom the above is addreſſed, I have to ſay, that your Friend's Review meets with approbation, and therefore you will put it to the preſs with all expedition. Your's, &c.

W. THOM.

Nottingham, 10th Feb. 1800.

A REVIEW,

&c. &c. &c.

THE Supreme Ruler of the Universe has, in all ages of the world, raised up distinguished persons, at certain seasons of time, in order to bring about such and such particular events; amongst whom the late Mr. Kilham was called to act at least in the Methodistical department a very conspicuous part.—Having proceeded with much suffering and labor, in that path which Providence and his duty seemed to point out, till changed circumstances had rendered his toilsome exertions less necessary, he was removed to a happier station, far from the frowns of insolence—the shafts of malice—the clamours of bigotry—the sneers of contempt—and the blustering strife of tongues.

I am aware that it will be urged against this farther examination of Mr. Kilham's conduct, that it is in a great measure unnecessary; especially as the division is formed—Mr. K. dead—and the Old Connexion, with respect to number, in a more flourishing state than it has ever been at any former period. I reply, that my chief intention in this Review is, (1st.) to remove any doubts that may remain in any of our Brethren's minds respecting the propriety of their conduct in separating from the Old Methodists.—(2d.) I would prevent others, into whose hands these pages may fall, from condemning the conduct of our departed Friend, till they have more fully considered the motives that influenced it.—(3d.) I would not be considered, nor, *God is my witness*, would I in reality feel in my bosom the least jot of uneasiness, on account of the prosperity of the Old Connexion since the division. Peace is the blessing which I seek, from a conviction of *the blessedness that attends it*. Some years ago, I employed my pen to prevent a division, and if

peace

peace could have been procured without that resort, I should have rejoiced in it. The Societies were shaken to their very centre by the jarrings and discord of bigotted and interested men. Again and again it was said, *Depart from us.* As such, I, for my own part, feel perfectly tranquil in the confidence, that the division is approved by the Lord, and am glad to have found peace in our borders. I would not for a moment hesitate to *rejoice* over the prosperity of the Old Connexion. If the cause of Christ and Religion be widely extended and deeply rooted, that is my most earnest desire. If *Christ be preached therein I rejoice and will rejoice.* Nor can I presume otherwise, but that this is the very language, which a great majority of the New Connexion daily adopt, both in their communications with the world, and their converse with God. Hence let none suppose that they see us pining with envy, or burning with malevolence, because God has not withdrawn vast numbers from the Old Connexion. The *Judge of all the earth will do right, and may his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Knowing human nature in some degree, I am assured that the principles and practices which Mr. Kilham opposed, will, if indulged, sooner or later again produce contention.—The times are not what they were fifty years ago; nor can men's minds, if at all enlightened, be easily satisfied with specious pretexts, or glossy appearances. There is a time when a father's *commands* over his children ought to melt into *counsel*, and when the father, if he discharge his duty *ought* to admit an affectionate son to be a sharer in his concerns; and if the father act otherwise, there is no wonder, if the son prove disobedient and refractory. Such are the reflections which we would apply both to the New and Old Connexions of Methodists, and to all other connexions. If the preachers will be *masters and lords over God's heritage*, they must expect remonstrances and discontent; but when the preachers and people, like a father and son, are united in interests, in counsels, and all other con-

connections in life, every cause, every motive, every pretence for discontent vanish; and their whole exertions must become directed to one common end. These are therefore the reasons for retracing Mr. Kilham's steps—to satisfy our own friends, and to hand down to posterity the memory of a man deservedly esteemed for his many and shining virtues—and lastly, that *past* troubles may produce *present* thought, and prevent future commotions.

In the year 1791, Mr. K. was sent to labour in the Newcastle circuit, and in consequence of some troubles which he was called to pass through, published his Address to the Newcastle Society, for which he was summoned to attend the London Conference, and in his preface to his Progress of Liberty, writes of it thus: "My *prosecutors* and *persecutors*, passed by Messrs. Bradburn and Thomas Taylor, though they both stood many circuits on the minutes before me, because they were great men, and my opponents thought they could not so soon crush them, and entered into a long examination of my *motives* and *conduct*. While I read an Address to the Conference (which I am constrained to omit inserting here, for want of room) most of the preachers were in tears. When they had tried me part of two days, they could not find a single sentence in the pamphlet, but what Mr. Bradburn proved to be true; yet they condemned it, as calculated to do mischief among our people. The Lord, however, graciously stood by me *through the whole trial*, and prevented me from being hurt by any of my enemies."

In 1793, Mr. K. went into Scotland, from whence he published a paper under the signature of *Freeman* and *Trueman*, which was re-printed at Newcastle, and circulated through the Connexion: "We have," says he, "very considerable evils to complain of, which if not reformed in time, will do us much mischief, if not entirely ruin us." He afterwards published a letter signed *Priscilla and Aquilla*, and another signed *Martin Luther*, all directed to one and the same end. The reason why he wrote them under feigned names, was to prevent his being ruined by the

postage

postage of returned letters; for many would have rebuked, reproved, admonished, cautioned, &c.

About the time of the Manchester Conference, 1795, the pamphlet signed *Paul and Silas* was published by Mr. K. and by his influence a protest was made by him and others against the ambiguous terms of the rules of pacification. He wrote the following Address to the Conference, which was signed by fifty-seven of the preachers; and would have been signed by others, if they had had an opportunity:

"*Honoured Fathers and Brethren,*

"We are *extremely sorry*, that any thing should cause us to differ in sentiment, from a majority of the Conference. We are *constrained* to do it, from a principle of truth and honesty. It appears to us, that no rule made in this house should be capable of bearing a double meaning. We are sorry to find an *appearance* of duplicity in some of our rules. We exceedingly object to the addition which is made to the first proposition of reconciliation, unless you add to it Messrs. Thompson, Benson and Bradburn's explanation of the word *separation*. If this be not granted, we jointly enter our protest against that, and every other rule of the same nature. And intreat the preachers met in Conference, to respect their character, by making their rules so explicit, that no person may misunderstand them. We are your affectionate brethren in the Gospel, &c."

Notwithstanding the honesty and uprightness manifested in this address, a clamour was made against it, and it was actually suppressed without its ever being publicly read to the preachers.

In September 1795, Mr. K. published his Progress of Liberty, in which he gives the outline of a Constitution, humbly proposed to the people called Methodists. This pamphlet, which is inserted in the Monitor, was the grand cause of all the persecutions which at last overwhelmed him. The book is in general filled with good common sense and sound argument, and cannot be perused too often.—

Mr.

Mr. K. thus writes of it,—"After pondering these matters over in my mind, with prayer for direction from God, I wrote the pamphlet called, 'The Progress of Liberty, &c.' The God that searches all hearts, knows, that I entered upon this work from the purest motives. It was to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom amongst us as a people. Every line of the pamphlet was written with this intention. Many things I suppressed, determining to introduce none, but what appeared necessary to answer the end I aimed at. If I could not write gravely upon subjects that appear to sensible persons, both childish and ridiculous, this was my infirmity, and will be pardoned by the candid. It would require the gravity of an angel, to write seriously upon the subjects I have treated with a little humour. The *thing* called Bishop, to be introduced among us, appeared so contemptible to me, that I could not write seriously about it. 'To make merry with our friends' over this, in my judgment, is as innocent as Elijah's making merry over the poor priests of Baal, when they made wry faces, cut themselves, and cried out to a dumb idol, "O Baal hear us."

It was this Progress of Liberty which brought forth the following censure, or as Mr. Kilham very properly called it,

THE

LONDON METHODISTICAL BULL.

To Mr. William Hunter, Chairman of the Newcastle District.

London, 5th Dec. 1795.

Dear Brother,

We have met together solemnly to consider the pamphlet lately published by Alexander Kilham, entitled, 'The Progress of Liberty,' and think ourselves obliged to write to you on the subject, as the Chairman of that district in which Mr. Kilham labours.

We detest the spirit of the book, and are persuaded it contains most malicious expressions against the body of preachers in general, and against respectable individuals

individuals in particular. We have no doubt the pamphlet has an immediate tendency to prejudice our people against their preachers; and to destroy the work of God. If it go into the world at large, it must give the public the most unfavourable opinion concerning us; it also tends to destroy our preachers' fund, by holding out the assistants as a company of whining Jesuits, *and consequently atrocious knaves. So bad a book has not been published among us, since the first revival of the work of God.*

We therefore, as persons implicated in Mr. Kilham's charges, immediately advise and claim a district meeting. For Mr. Kilham can do us no harm as an open enemy, but he will do us unspeakable hurt as a secret one. If Mr. Kilham continue among us after such gross and malicious assertions, we to all intents and purposes plead guilty, and must by the public be supposed to be a company of villains.

We look up to you and the other members of district committees for redress. Our wounded cause, and the characters of preachers in general, call for it immediately. The cause of God is at stake, and if justice is not done in this case, we may take our farewell of primitive Methodism. We desire you will read this our testimony against the malice, pride, and audaciousness, with which the pamphlet under consideration is replete.

We are your affectionate Brethren,

Thomas Coke, John Pawson, Fran. Wrigley, Wm. West, Tho. Rankin, George Story, Adam Clark, Wm. Griffith, Geo. Whitfield, Rich. Reece.

This London Methodistical Bull, (so called in allusion to the bulls or edicts of the Pope) caused Mr. Kilham once more to resume his pen, and defend himself by an examination thereof, in which he writes thus:—"There are two parts of the Progress of Liberty, which appear to be misunderstood by several of our friends. I shall beg leave to declare myself more explicitly upon them both. The first is, the management of our preachers' fund.

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"It was thought by many, that the rules of this fund would have been altered last year. We strongly recommended it from our district meeting in Aberdeen, by the printed minutes we sent to the preachers But so far from an alteration taking place, if I mistake not, the clause that had formerly prevented a preacher or widow having more than thirty pounds per annum, was taken away, and that *now* every preacher or widow, is to rise in allowance according to the years of travelling. Mr. Henry Moore, and several respectable preachers, reprobated the plan in very strong terms, (considering it a reproach to Methodism) both at the time the rules were first made and since. Trueman and Freeman's letter, pointed out the evils attending the rules, &c. but it did not alter the determination of a majority of the preachers Most of our people who subscribe to the fund, have no knowledge that such rules exist. I considered it my duty to expose them in strong terms, that our friends might have proper views into the subject.

"I would not, however, have any person to draw inferences from what I have said, contrary to my meaning. 1. Though a great majority of the preachers of two Conferences have agreed to them, I am fully persuaded, they have not sufficiently examined their influence. I have endeavoured to place the subject in as strong a light as possible before them, that they may be convinced, of their being unscriptural and unjust. 2. It appeared absolutely necessary to me, that our friends who subscribe to this fund, should know, how the money is, or may be applied by the present existing rules. 3. *Begging* by the address which was drawn up long before the alteration of disbursement took place, and not hinting to our friends the nature and design of our present rules, appears *jesuitical;* and that we cannot proceed on this plan, without acting the part of *whining, canting friars.*— 4. Among 400 preachers, it may lead some old men, who are badly received, to prolong their years of travelling. If an appeal were made to the whole Connexion, would it not be found that an individual

or

or more, who may be considered as drones amongst us, are received as a scourge from God, by a great majority of the societies where they labour?

"I shall conclude these remarks by observing; 1. It is the unscriptural system of rules, and not any men that I am attacking. 2. So far from thinking that one in ten of the old preachers are drones, or are badly received by our people, I believe it is quite the reverse. Many of them labour beyond their strength, and are received as the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ. There are not a few who continue in circuits from the purest motives, that ought immediately to become supernumeraries, or be superannuated. They are killing themselves in labours they are not able to accomplish. 3. I only add, if any person suppose my reflections mean more than I have now declared, they have misunderstood the design of what I have written. If this has arisen from want of perspicuity on the subject, or by not sufficiently guarding some expressions, I am sorry for it and sincerely ask their pardon: though I am not conscious this is the case.

"The other part of the pamphlet I allude to, is the ludicrous account I have given of the bishop plan.—This plan was first invented at the Litchfield meeting. But when it was revealed to the preachers, a vast majority of them determined to oppose it. In the letters published last year, several things were said on the subject. It was supposed, no person would have attempted to have brought it forward in our last Conference. It was, however, introduced and supported in the manner I have mentioned: and was rejected three times by a great majority of the preachers. When I wrote my pamphlet, I thought to prevent it from being brought forward again, and to cause every preacher and sensible friend to abhor it, was to place it in as ridiculous a light as the subject would admit of. It appeared both childish and unscriptural to have bishops on the plans proposed; which led me to place the three attempts in a sarcastical light, that our people might *innocently* laugh them out of countenance.

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I had not the least design to injure the character of any man, or to raise indignation in the breasts of our people against any who supported those plans. It was the system I attacked; and I only wished to meddle with those that countenanced it so far, as appeared necessary to make it sink into contempt for ever.

"I believe from my heart, that all our brethren who were for the bishop plan, acted from motives which they thought justifiable, and meant to advance the interests of our Connexion by it.

"If any person suppose I have gone too far in speaking upon the executive head, and imagine that my observations amount to a charge against the piety, morality, or usefulness of the persons alluded to, nothing can be more foreign to my meaning than this. These good men may be exceedingly useful in great circuits, and be helpful to our Connexion in other respects, and yet not be suitable for a head to such a large body as ours. If my expressions are construed to mean more than I have now declared, I am very sorry for it, and take this opportunity of frankly declaring, that it was quite contrary to my intention: and if I am not greatly mistaken, no person can *torture what I have said* to mean any such thing. Were I to publish a new edition of the pamphlet, this part should be so modified, as to give no offence to any reasonable person. And every other part of the pamphlet, which several of my particular friends, (whose judgment I prefer to my own) think exceptionable, on account of the sarcasm, &c. they contain.

"So far from intending to reflect upon the preachers in general, I have endeavoured to exculpate them from the charges which many attribute to the whole body. I solemnly declare, that I greatly love and honour the preachers in general. I am sorry that I have been so far misunderstood *while attacking a system*, which appears injurious to religion, as to be charged with representing a body of men, I truly deem the servants of Jesus Christ, as a company of atrocious knaves.—I declare, nothing could be more contrary to my design. Their deep seriousness manifested to all connected

with them, and their abundant labours and usefulness in the vineyard of Christ, must prevent such an impeachment being suspected of the preachers in general, by the Methodists.

"I intreat the impartial reader to consider whether an easy distinction may not be made, between *an imperfect and unestablished system*, exercised in the government of a large body of people, and the *private characters* of the men who have to act in that body? Whether what I have stated as evils in the Connexion be true or false? When this is taken into the account, with the declarations I now make, as to the integrity and piety of the Methodist preachers in general, I appeal to every candid person to determine, whether I have not shown my disinterested love, both to the preachers and people, by venturing to suggest a plan which (however I may be mistaken) appears to promise such an union throughout the whole body, as cannot be destroyed.

"Many of our preachers do not see the evils of our present plan. Others mourn under them, but are at a loss for a remedy. Whilst I profess myself ready to apologize for any thing which appears to effect the characters of respectable individuals, or is made to imply an impeachment of the designs of the body of preachers, I cannot conclude this remark better than in the beautiful words of Bishop Burnet:—"Whatever "moderation we owe to men's *persons*, we owe none "at all to their *errors*, and to that frame which is "built on and supported by them."

Again, in his address to the same pamphlet, he writes to the preachers who signed the Bull:—"I am sorry to find, on examining your letter impartially, that it breathes the persecuting spirit of a Bonner and a Laud, instead of the meek and loving spirit of our glorious Redeemer.

"Can you suppose in your cool reflections, that pride moved me to expose myself to all kinds of slander, reproach, and contempt from my brethren the preachers, and others that oppose me? Would pride have suffered me to have sacrificed my reputation, my

place

place and advantages in the Connexion, to serve the interests of our people, as it appears I have done, by your letter? I foresaw the storm that would be raised, but determined to face it in the name of the Lord Jesus. I weighed the matter calmly before God, and resolved to venture my *all* at the stake, if I might but help in removing those evils, which threaten our dissolution. I determined to follow the Son of God without the camp, to bear reproach for his sake, should he permit it to come upon me.

"Could malice lead me to point out the evils which *actually exist* amongst us, and to press upon the preachers to adopt such measures, as would effectually heal every disorder which is complained of? Was it malice that led Jesus Christ and his Apostles to shew sinners their real state, to offer them recovery, and to press upon them to accept of salvation, without money or price? Is it malice that leads you to pursue their plan, in pointing out to your congregations their disordered state, offering them recovery by the blood of sprinkling, and intreating them to accept of deliverance on the terms proposed? Have I not pointed out *real glaring evils* in our Connexion, without exaggerating any of them, proposed a remedy, and pressed upon you, and the rest of our brethren, to apply the means to remove them at once, while there is hope of recovery? God is my witness, I have done this with the greatest affection, and from the purest motives; and yet you declare that malice influenced me! You have engaged to judge my principles, and have passed such a sentence, as I am conscious the Judge of the whole earth would not, were I called this moment to his bar.

"How far I have been audacious in venturing to point out the evils our people groan beneath, and seeking the welfare of our whole Connexion, by having them speedily removed, I am not able to determine. My youth, and my having only travelled eleven years in the Connexion, would have been powerful motives to have restrained my pen, had any other way opened for our escape. But when I saw men of longer standing

in the work refusing to come forward, the zeal of the Lord constrained me. I can assure you, it required a good deal of courage to face the difficulties I saw in my way. If this be audaciousness, I hope God will ever help me to take up my cross, and boldly attack corruption, whenever it lifts up its head among us, should you make use of a worse word to misrepresent my conduct.

"Though you have called my pamphlet "gross malicious expressions," you have not ventured to say they are *false*. It is very easy to *abuse* any thing we do not like, but to *prove* it contrary to the truth, is often very difficult. You have not quoted a passage from the pamphlet to prove what you have asserted. If I have represented our affairs according to the nature of your assertions, it will be very easy to confute me. But I venture to challenge you all, and the whole Connexion, to prove, that I have forged any lies, or misrepresented any thing I have considered. If you will answer my pamphlet fairly, and convince me by argument that I am wrong, I will most gladly stand open to conviction. But should you only publish general declamation, instead of argument, and make use of abusive language, depend on it, your cause will be weakened by such a conduct. And should you *force me* into measures I wish at present to avoid, I can amplify most of the particulars mentioned in the pamphlet, by naming persons and circumstances, which will carry conviction to all who properly consider them.

"You declare, my pamphlet has "an immediate tendency to prejudice the people against the preachers, and to destroy the work of God." In the same passage you insinuate, "That it contains most malicious expressions against the body of preachers in general, and against respectable individuals in particular."—In the pamphlet I have repeatedly declared, that a great majority of the preachers detest a number of the evils complained of; but cannot prevent them, unless the people, by their representatives are allowed to come forward, to point them out, and help to remove them.

them. I think it is impossible for you, or any person to prove, that there are any *malicious expressions* against any person in the pamphlet: and that it is only the conduct of individuals that is principally complained of. I do not recollect having said any thing of individuals, unless it be in exposing the bishop plan, and in the postscript. In exposing the bishop plan, which many think *beneath contempt*, I have mentioned no names. If you *torture* my words to the utmost of your power, you cannot make them amount to *malicious expressions*. Does my description of the executive head amount to such a crime, that I must be expelled the Connexion on account of it? Must I be cast out from among you because I have said, "we saw or we supposed we saw, in one the face of a Calf, &c."

"The Prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and his Apostles, have made use of expressions abundantly more severe, and as sarcastical, as those I have made use of, in the bishop plan. Read 1 *Kings* xviii. 17. *Ez.* i. 10. and x. 14.—*Matth.* iii. 7. and the whole of the xxiii. chapter, especially 33 verse.—*Mark* viii. 33. *Luke* xiii. 32.—*Acts* xiii. 10. & xxiii. 3. A multitude of other passages speak in the same language, as every person acquainted with the Bible can testify.

"How can what I have said have an immediate tendency to prejudice the people against the preachers? All our friends, who are acquainted with our affairs know, that the evils I complain of exist among us. They are exceedingly grieved at their continuance. Not one in a hundred of our societies or congregations would be reconciled to them, were they acquainted with them. It is not possible that my pamphlet, by pointing out existing evils, and proposing an immediate remedy for them, will prejudice our people. No, my dear Brethren, this can never be the case. Your wishing to conceal them, and determining to hold them fast, is the only thing that will prejudice our people. And your slandering, reviling, and persecuting a man, that has the honesty and courage to tell you of those evils, pointing out an immediate remedy for them, without injuring ourselves, is a direct way

to force our societies to think hardly of you, and all who act as you have done.

"You say the pamphlet has an "immediate tendency to destroy the work of God." Is the work of God supported by keeping our people ignorant of a number of things which concern their happiness? Is it supported by bringing out a number of preachers to travel with us, without their knowledge, and against their consent? Is it supported by telling the yearly collection is made to support the gospel in the North of Scotland and the West of Ireland, when a great deal of it is spent in riding in coaches to the Conference, in long removes of families, when there is no necessity for it, and in other things of the same nature? Is the work of God supported by a preacher with a wife and family telling the people, we have only 12 pounds a year, and leading many of them to suppose this is the whole our families have to live on; when we cost the Connexion more than one hundred pounds a year? Is it supported by the present management of our Kingswood school, and the preachers fund? If you had said a species of *priestcraft* and *popery*, with *the work of man*, are likely to be destroyed by my pamphlet, all that read it would have credited your assertion. But as the matter now stands, every impartial person will suppose, that what I have proposed has an *immediate tendency* to promote the *real work* of God in our Connexion.

"You say, 'If it get into the world at large, it must give the public the most unfavourable opinion concerning us; and therefore contract our sphere of usefulness." Are we, my dear Brethren, to have the favourable opinion of the public, by continuing our evils, provided we can conceal them from their notice; or by frankly acknowleding and laying them aside? Must we play the hypocrite in their presence to have their favourable opinion, and be useful in converting souls, by artfully concealing what would excite their displeasure? Many of them are cool in their reflections, and will examine matters seriously, before they suffer their judgment to draw conclusions.—

Should

Should my pamphlet appear at their bar, and your violent letter against it, I am apprehensive, it would not be possible to bias their judgment in your favour. They will solemnly ask, do the evils exist which the book complains of? Are they calculated to injure or help the work of God? Would it be better to retain them than lay them aside? &c. If I am not greatly mistaken, they would pass a favourable sentence upon what I have done, and severely censure the measures you have taken, to *suppress* me and the pamphlet. In my judgment, our sphere of usefulness would be considerably enlarged, were we to renounce what is a reproach to our Connexion, and the religion of our blessed Redeemer.

" You add, ' It also tends to destroy our preachers fund, by holding out the assistants as a company of *whining jesuits*, and consequently atrocious knaves." While Mr. Wesley lived, the preachers fund was conducted by an equitable plan. The *real wants* of superanuated preachers and widows, were the rule of disbursement. But since his death, both the yearly and preachers fund collections, have, in many things, been differently applied? As a great number of our people are ignorant of the subject, I will recite the address to the friends and members of the Methodist society, and then quote two rules from the minutes, respecting the present mode of disbursement, leaving all that read these lines to judge, how far we *whine* and *cant*, when we beg for the fund, since it reverted from its original foundation. The stewards of the fund desire the assistant preachers and others, to read over and enlarge upon the following printed address:

" *Dear Brethren*,

" As several of the PREACHERS in our Connexion, " who have spent their time and strength in calling " sinners to repentance, are now so superannuated, " that they can no longer keep a circuit; and as others " of them (who are gone to their reward) have left " destitute widows and children behind them. In " order to make some small provision for these,

" it

" it has been agreed on in Conference, that every " travelling preacher shall, out of his little allowance " subscribe half a guinea yearly." [Since the death of Mr. Wesley, the subscription has been raised to a guinea a year.]

" But as this small sum is in no wise sufficient to " answer the growing demands, several of our friends " have offered their assistance by subscribing some- " thing yearly, and if others of you shall see good to " follow their laudable example, it will no doubt be " pleasing to God, a comfort to his worn-out servants, " and a great encouragement to those who are still " labouring in the Lord's vineyard; and of consequence " give great satisfaction to your affectionate servants " in the gospel." (The Stewards.)

" While Mr. Wesley lived, and by his direction the *real wants* of the preachers, &c. were the rule of disbursement, nothing could be more proper than this address. But since the mode of disbursement is exceedingly altered, can we beg by this address, and not hint to our people that the rules of disbursement are altered, without acting as *whining jesuits?* If we read this address, ought not the new rules to be read also? Because our people in general know nothing of the alteration; and therefore are not treated fairly, when the old address is read and inforced, while the new rules of disbursement are kept from their notice.

" If I am not greatly mistaken, the following rules justify every stricture in my pamphlet:

" Every preacher, whom the Conference judges to " be worn out, and who has not departed from the " work, shall receive 12 pounds a year for life. And " every preacher who has laboured longer than twelve " years, without departing from the work, and is " judged by the Conference to be worn-out, shall " receive one pound annually for life, for every year " he has travelled above twelve, to the time he became " superannuated. Every widow of a travelling preacher " shall receive 12 pounds a year for life. And if her " deceased husband travelled more than 12 years " before he was worn-out, she shall be allowed one " pound

"pound annually for life, for every year her husband "travelled above twelve, till the time he was superan- "nuated." Rule 5, 6, of the fund.

"These *unscriptural, unjust* rules, sufficiently prove every thing I have declared on this subject. I shall leave you (who have made use of the elegant expression) to determine, how far we are 'atrocious knaves' while we act as we do at present on this head. I cannot suppose that God will suffer you to prop up the fund much longer, on its present sandy foundation. I refer you to the pamphlet to know the sentiments of our most sensible friends in these parts upon it. It is hardly possible to execrate the system of rules too much.

"You seem determined that I shall not continue in the Connexion. It appears to me, you not only wish our district to meet, but are seeking to *over awe them* to suspend me at once. You say, 'you immediately advise and claim a district meeting. For Mr. Kilham can do us no harm as an open enemy, but he will do us unspeakable hurt as a secret one. If Mr. Kilham continue among us, after such gross and malicious assertions, we to all intents and purposes plead guilty, and must by the public be supposed to be a company of villains.'

"Have you a right to interfere with our district? Has any person a right to call a meeting of the preachers, but those who live in the district? Do you think of over-awing Mr. Hunter and the brethren into your measures? Which of the three evils am I guilty of, which are specified in the rules of pacification? Immorality, erronious doctrine, or want of abilities for the work? If they meet, will they pursue your plan, and expel me immediately? Is it reasonable that my brethren, the preachers, should be my accusers, witnesses against me, and both judge and jury? Are our Methodistical laws capable of taking this step, without the people being allowed to hear the trial, or speak a word in favour of the criminal? Ought I not at least to have a jury chosen from our people, and the trial to be open for all our friends? Or will

you

you show your independence of our societies, and congregations, and expel me by the power you possess in yourselves?

"If I *must* be called an enemy, have I acted as a secret one? Did I not oppose in full Conference alone, (or nearly alone) your measures with Dr. Whitehead and the London trustees? Which in a great measure have been the cause of all our troubles ever since; and the expence of the lawsuit which is just ended, will be felt to our sorrow, for many years to come. Did I act as a secret enemy in the letter which was read and torn in pieces in the Bristol Conference? And though I wrote last year, anonymously to prevent the expence of postage, did you not all know what I wrote, as well as our people? Have I not published my name with this pamphlet, and told you where it was printed? If I had left the Connexion you might have represented my writing as a proof of chagrin or disappointment. But while I am with you, enjoying all the advantages of the Connexion, and aiming to do good to our body at large, how can I be a secret enemy? I appeal to God, the searcher of all hearts, that sincere love to the preachers and people, was the only motive which induced me to write. And should you continue to call me your enemy, *because I have told you the truth*, the Lord will sooner or later convince you of the unjustness of your censures and proceedings. I ask you in the name of God, do the evils I complain of exist? Have I exaggerated them, or concealed many circumstances which would have illustrated different parts of my pamphlet? Will expelling me from the Connexion prove that you are right, and that I am wrong? Would there be any harm in acknowledging that these evils exist, and laying them aside immediately? Would not this method be more acceptable to our people, than continuing the evils and expelling me? I appeal to your consciences, whether you can as honest men banish me from the Connexion for what I have done? Will not casting me out from among you, and holding fast the evils that exist among us,

be

be the direct way (to use your own *polite* expressions) to convince the public "to all intents and purposes that you are guilty," and lead them to suppose, that you are "a company of villains." On the other hand, it will be possible to convince the public, that you wish to remove every thing that hinders the prosperity of our cause; and shew them that you are honest men, by suffering one of your body to continue with you, though he has had the courage to point out several things which may be removed to the advantage of our people, and for the glory of God.

"Mr. Pawson insinuated, that I could not continue in the Connexion with a good conscience under these views. If I were silently to pass them over, without striving to have them removed, my conscience would reproach me. But while I endeavour to the utmost of my power, to redress the grievances complained of, my heart does not condemn me for abiding where I am called. And I can assure you all, and all the world, that I do not fear what you can do unto me. If you cast me out the Lord will provide. It would be wicked in me to *cringe* and tell you I am sorry for what I have done, when I feel a contrary principle in my heart.

"You declare, 'so bad a book has not been published among us since the first revival of the work of 'God.' And you add, 'we look up to you and the 'district committee for redress. Our wounded cause, 'and the characters of the preachers in general, call 'for it immediately. The cause of God is at stake, 'and if justice be not done in this case, we may take 'our farewell of primitive Methodism.' You all know, when evils have been exposed in the church of Rome, or in national churches, the cry of the clergy has always been, *The church is in danger—The cause of God is at stake—Religion is likely to be ruined, &c.* Is our cause wounded by my pamphlet, or the evils it complains of? Will the cause of God among us, which is now at the stake, be ruined, unless Alexander Kilham be expelled the Connexion? If you mean by the cause of God the evils I have exposed, as the reproach of Methodism, I believe they are at the stake,

and

and will soon be burnt up: but the *real cause of God*, will receive no injury by what I have done. And my book can only be considered to be bad by *those, who wish to keep our people in ignorance, and to continue the evils which it exposes.*

" I am not certain whether Mr. Hunter will call a district meeting or not. If he should, I cannot prevent my pamphlets from being circulated. They must appear at the bar of the public: and you may depend on it, your letter to Mr. Hunter, and my animadversions on it shall be published also.

" I am your affectionate servant in the Gospel,

ALEXANDER KILHAM."

" I shall only add part of my address to the London Conference, which was read when I was tried for writing a former pamphlet; and which affected the preachers to such a degree, that the greatest part of them wept while I read it. If I am fairly tried either at a district meeting or in the Conference, I only intreat for these few observations to be attended to, and then I shall be perfectly satified.

First, " That the pamphlet may be read before the " preachers that sit in judgment on me; or that it may " be read privately by every preacher who has not " read it before my trial commenceth. If this request " is not complied with, I shall look on myself exposed " to condemnation, without being fairly heard. No " judge or jury ought to pass sentence, before they have " examined the charges brought against a criminal."

Secondly, " I request that what I have done, and " what I have written may be tried by the word of " God. I appeal from all human laws and rules, to the " law and testimony of the living God; and beg the " charges brought against me may be tried by the word " that shall judge us at the last day."

Thirdly, " I beg that my providential call to what " I have done may be attended to. That no detached " word or sentence may be brought as a witness against " me; but that the scope of my arguments may be fairly " stated, and every step taken in the affair, that truth " and uprightness require.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, "I particularly request, that time may be "allowed for my trial. A few hours spent in this work "may be of service to me, and the cause at large. I "sincerely beg of you, my brethren, *who favor my* "*righteous cause* to become my advocates. It will "be painful for me to speak before the brethren, but "if you will come forth *to the help of the Lord against* "*the mighty*, truth will prevail.

Lastly, "If it can be proved that I have acted "contrary to the word of God, and the engagements "I have entered into with you, I beg that judgment "may be mixed with mercy. Reprove, rebuke, "correct, or expel, if you think it will be for the "glory of God, and the interest of his kingdom. "But if I cannot be criminated by the word of truth; "I sincerely beg *you will not pass sentence against me*, "*lest by doing this, you expose yourselves to the* "*judgments of the Almighty*."

Notwithstanding all the powerful arguments and great concessions which Mr. Kilham made in the pamphlet, (dated Feb. 4, 1796,) in a fortnight afterwards, a special district meeting was called at Newcastle, in consequence of the Methodistical edict; And being again examined at a second district meeting, he published an account of his trial, and begins it in the following manner:—"After prayer, the district-meeting was opened by enquiring, 'What is 'the purport of our assembling together? Answer, 'To take into consideration a late publication, entitled, 'The Progress of Liberty amongst the Methodists, 'written by Mr. Kilham.' It was then asked, 'In 'what manner shall we proceed? Answer, According 'to the present laws and existing rules of our body.' When they were urged to shew any laws or rules that applied to the case in hand, they read the following *important* rule, from the minutes of the Conference held in 1792. 'No person is to call another Heretic, 'Bigot, or any other disrespectful name, on any ac-'count for a difference in sentiment.' Every candid reader will be able to judge, whether this rule was

 sufficient

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sufficient to try me by or not. It would require the wisdom of a Solomon to make it apply to my case!"

As the note sent to the chairman, together with the most prominent part of this trial, as well as the second trial at Sunderland, are extracted from his own Journal in the Life, page 96 to 113, I shall pass them over at present, and hasten to the other parts more important.

The time of the Conference came, and Mr. K. set off. He passed through Leeds on his route to London. The friends had much conversation with him, and encouraged him by their kindness and prayers. *I am going*, said he to the writer of these pages, *to be judged by the great Sanhedrim.—I know not what awaits me; but may God be glorified, and the will of the Lord done.*

The Conference being assembled, the trial commenced, which formed an epoch never to be forgotten in the annals of Methodism. The more any free-born Briton reads these proceedings the more he must be filled with sorrow and indignation. They may think they have acquitted themselves properly in this memorable scene. They may vaunt themselves highly on the triumph of his expulsion; and a combination of circumstances may concur for a time to favour such suppositions. But we must remember, that vengeance against evil is not always speedily executed.—To the test of Providence and time it is committed. The conduct of each has not escaped the piercing eye of heaven, and each will sooner or later be rewarded according to their works. Poor Kilham! thou restest from thy labours, after a rough and painful passage. Could our words reach thy ears, we should ask thee, what kind of address do such of thy foes as have already quitted these earthly mansions, give thee in the world of spirits, where *the servant is free from his master, and they hear not the voice of the oppressor?* Perhaps thou wouldst reply, We must both ere long stand at one common & impartial bar, where the secrets of all hearts will be disclosed; and till then let me wait with humble reverence the righteous decision of that tribunal, so awful, so tremendous, and unspeakably majestic.

But

But to return—the trial commenced (July 26, 1796) on the first day of the Conference (Monday). Mr. Mather asked him several questions, to which he gave written answers on the Tuesday morning. Immediately a list of charges was brought forward and read, of which they positively refused to give him a copy, even till the last day that he stood at their bar, when he was permitted to take one.

"On our return from breakfast, (says he) I again requested a copy of the charges they meant to prefer against me, with time to make my defence. To have a trial by a jury of respectable friends. And to have it public for the society in the New Chapel, that they might judge of the merits of my cause. But all these requests were rejected by the Conference. To shew that I had a right to such a trial, I read the following emphatical words, written a few years ago, by Dr. Coke, on the state of Dewsbury Preaching-House:—

"Has not every man, when accused, a right to an "*impartial* trial? And can that trial be *impartial* "when the same persons are Accusers, Jury, Judges, "and Executioners? Can any process be more absurd, "more inconsistent with the essence of Justice, than "this? And can it be supposed that it ever could "enter into the mind of so wise a man as Mr. Wesley, "to accede to a proposal so contrary to every idea of "law and equity?—Let us, then, again resume the "consideration of that important hinge, on which the "argument chiefly turns. Is it equitable, in this or "any case of a judicial nature, that the same persons "should be Accusers, Jury, Judges, and Executioners? "For this is the very power which the Trustees "require!!" [And which the Preachers *now* plead for in my case, under the title of trial by our Peers.]

"I have perused books on the laws of nations, on "the civil and municipal laws of many countries, on "the ecclesiastical laws of many churches, but never "met with such an instance of bare-faced tyranny and "injustice as this requisition implies, except in the "histories of the Popish Inquisition. And can the

" God of Justice require submission to such a demand? " Or has any man upon earth a just authority to " oblige any other man or number of men, to submit " to such tyranny? Is it possible that there can be " many in this tolerating, improved age, who, on a full " view of the subject, will justify any attempt that can " be made to establish such a law?"

" On this passage I shall just remark, 1. The Dr. declares that every man has a right to an *impartial* trial, when accused. 2. That his Accusers ought by no means to compose the Jury, and be both his Judges and Executioners. 3. It is inconsistent with the essence of Justice. 4. It is contrary to every idea of law and equity. 5. It is absurd. 6. It is bare-faced tyranny and injustice. 7. No laws civil, municipal, or ecclesiastical require it; except the Popish Inquisition. 8. The God of Justice does not require submission to such a demand. 9. No man or number of men, has a right to oblige any person to submit to such tyranny. 10. The Dr. supposes, it could never enter into the heart of such a wise man as Mr. Wesley, to accede to a proposal so contrary to every idea of law and equity. 11. Lastly, there are but few in this tolerating age, that will justify any attempt to establish such a law. No sooner, however, had I finished reading this excellent passage, than the Conference immediately became my Accusers, Jury, Judges, and in due time my Executioners. Tell it not in Gath! publish it not in Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines should rejoice!"

In respect to the charges brought against Mr. K. in Conference, the reader who wishes full information respecting it, may find it in the account published by himself; and really 'tis astonishing with what bare-faced impudence the Conference dared to assert, that he could not make good one of the charges he was called to substantiate!!!—Let posterity judge.

At the end of the trial, Mr. Kilham makes *an appeal to the Methodist societies throughout Great Britain*, the greatest part of which we shall copy, as it places the conduct of the Conference in its real colours, and

suffering

suffering innocence in its own native and undisguised dress; nor shall I make any apology to our friends, for bringing forward several circumstances which have before been mentioned in the Life. They are too important to omit. Indeed, could they be written in indelible characters in every place of worship in Great Britain, nay, in the Universe, I should not think them undeserving; particularly if they might happily be useful as a lesson for future generations. But of this I have not much hope, when the many dreadful examples which history has recorded, were neither able to stem the torrent of persecutions, nor out-face priestly domination, even in the 97th year of the 18th century.

"*Dear Brethren,*

"Having been tried in two district meetings this year, and no sentence passed in them against me, I was requested to attend the Conference in London, that I might undergo a new examination, and have judgment inflicted. After appearing three days at the bar of the Conference, my expulsion was fixed on yesterday in the afternoon. That every thing might be done on my part which the scriptures require, I sent the following letter to the preachers this morning, that they might seriously consider the particulars it contains. I have only altered a few words, to make it read better. A. K.

To the President of the Methodist Conference.

"*Dear Sir,*

"I hope you will be so kind as to read to the preachers the following lines:

"When I was called to your bar on Monday morning, and received a number of questions in writing to answer, I exceedingly rejoiced; hoping that I should have a fair trial. But, on my returning a written answer to those questions, on Tuesday morning, I soon perceived that a fair trial could not be obtained. You recollect I requested three things of you. 1. To give me a list of the charges which the committee of preachers

had drawn up on Monday.—2. That I might be tried by a jury of the people.—3. That my trial might be open to the friends in the new chapel. The two last requests you spurned with warmth, and refused to grant me the former. It appeared *extremely* unreasonable to me to be called to your bar to answer charges, which I had no previous knowledge of, without having a single advocate among you to plead my cause; but, as this was *your will*, I was obliged to submit. After you had spent the whole of Tuesday in bringing charges against me, debating upon them, and taking down short notes of what passed upon each, I hoped you would have chearfully given me a copy of the whole, when it was completed.—Yesterday morning I entreated you to give me a copy of the particulars you had drawn up the day before, and to allow me a few hours retirement, that I might give you a written answer to them; but this equitable request you refused to comply with; and began immediately to read over the list a second time, that new observations might be made upon it. When you had finished the second reading, without giving me a copy of the improved list, you desired me to retire, that you might sum up the evidence and come to a conclusion. On that part of the trial *which most concerned me*, you would neither allow me to be present, nor to have an advocate in your assembly; but made every preacher stand up and pledge himself before God, neither to tell me, nor any other person without doors, what passed in the debates, till the restraint should in some future period be taken off. From eleven o'clock in the morning till five in the evening, you had this business entirely to yourselves: at that hour I was called like a criminal to your bar, not to hear your debates, and the evidence summed up, but to receive sentence of expulsion. When I heard you deliver the sentence, without allowing me to know what had passed in the debates, I could not help recollecting the exclamation I formerly published: "O methodistical justice! to what region hast thou fled?" &c. It was with difficulty I prevailed on you

to

to read over those charges which you grounded my expulsion upon; and, when you put off confirming the sentence till four o'clock this afternoon, you refused to give me a copy of the particulars you had collected, with your remarks and resolves upon them: I pledged myself not to copy a line of them, but to return the whole exactly as I received them. I wanted them, that I might weigh each particular in my closet before God, and make every concession I possibly could on my appearance at your bar this afternoon; but you *determinately refused* to comply with my request.

"As far as you have convinced me that I have erred, so far I have frankly owned my offence, and asked your pardon. Two things I have chearfully acknowledged: 1. That in my warmth I have made use of several expressions which cannot be justified: 2. That a few of the accounts I have published, respecting the persons that receive from our funds, are not correct—I received them from very respectable persons, who in some particulars have been mistaken; and I promise to make equal concessions on any other part of the charges, would you only produce evidence of my having acted contrary to the gospel in them. God is my witness, I would a thousand times rather do it, than abide under the influence of any thing that is contrary to his will in this matter: but, as I cannot think it consistent with the religion of Jesus, to make a *feigned* confession of having offended, without conviction, therefore, should my life depend on it, I cannot go farther than I have proposed. Only produce evidence of my guilt on any of the charges I have not acknowledged, and. if you require it, I will publicly ask your pardon in the new chapel. If you will suffer your charges, after I have animadverted in writing upon them, to be laid before a jury of the friends, that are now in London (you chusing one half of the number, and I the other) their determination shall be final. If you refuse this proposal, I have nothing farther to add upon the subject.

"But I particularly request that you will inform me in writing, when I appear at your bar this afternoon, by

by what law of the *bible*—of *justice*—of the *nation*—or of *conference*, you try and expel me? Do you expel me in the first place for immorality? or, secondly, for preaching erroneous doctrines? or, thirdly, for want of diligence and faithfulness in the work? If these things are not the cause, tell me *honestly* when I appear before you.

"There are two things which will follow my expulsion. 1. Irreparable injury to my character, throughout these nations. 2. Considerable loss to myself or family. I have subscribed 11 years to the preachers' fund; and, according to its rules, whoever you *chuse* to expel, loses the advantage of it.—Will you abide by the consequences of my expulsion? If I cannot have justice done by you, cannot I have it by putting my cause into the hands of those that have it in their power to see the injured righted? And, should you go to extremities, my character and property may both be secured by the laws of our land. I give you this information, that you may sit down and count the cost, before you pronounce the final sentence.

"I am sorry that you should so industriously labour to persuade the people where you go, that I cannot make good any of the charges I have brought against the persons alluded to. Some of the particulars you have selected from my pamphlets, and called charges, are no charges; others are only made such, by *your inferences*. If you will give me a copy of the particulars you have collected, I pledge myself to justify every thing I have asserted (except in those instances where I have made concessions and asked your pardon) to the satisfaction of every impartial reader. Only forbear the shouts of victory, till our people have a fair opportunity of examining both sides, and then let the event determine, whether you or I have the most cause to triumph. If you will suffer my reply to be circulated by the magazine, or as publicly as your remarks will be, and the people at large consider you to be victorious, then make use of what declarations you please on the subject. To their bar let us mutually appeal. But till that is done, let me intreat you

not

not to attempt to prepossess their minds in your favor, lest it should end contrary to your expectation.

"Earnestly intreating the God of glory to direct your steps aright in this matter, I am,

"Your affectionate servant,

ALEX. KILHAM."

Wood-street, 28th July, 1796.

"At four o'clock, I appeared again at the bar of Conference. I requested to know what answers they designed to return to the questions proposed, in the letter they received from me in the morning.—The president informed me it had been read, but that the brethren did not think it required any answer. They refused to inform me by what law I am tried, cast, condemned and expelled: as also, whether or not I am excluded for immorality—erroneous doctrines—want of abilities—or want of diligence and faithfulness in the work. The president desired then to know, if I had any thing farther to mention on the subject. I told the Conference that I had been this day for several hours in Zion-chapel, where I had seen nearly as many ministers of different denominations, assembled together, as there were preachers in that house, all uniting their influence to send missionaries to the South Sea islands. I had seen five ministers of different parties uniting with one accord, while they solemnly set apart near thirty missionaries for that great and arduous undertaking: but now it is probable I am come into the company of a greater number of preachers, professing the same religion, to see them expel one of their body, because he has ventured to tell them the truth. When I had finished, the president, after speaking a little, pronounced the sentence, in words to this effect: "*You, Mr. Alex. Kilham, are judged to be unworthy of a place in this body; and, therefore, I now inform you, that you are no longer a member of it, but are expelled from the Connexion.*" After two of them had prayed, they offered to return what I had subscribed to the preachers' fund; but I informed them, that I should advise with my friends, before I received it; and, it was probable, I should apply some other way for it. "I have

" I have just seen a hand-bill now circulating, signed by the president and secretary of the Conference, declaring, that I could not make good one of the charges I was called to substantiate; and, therefore, they have expelled me from the Connexion. As none of the people were present at the trial, and the Conference refused to let a jury examine the matter, every impartial inquirer after truth, will consider it his duty to suspend his judgment on this subject, till their account and mine are laid before the people. If I do not answer their declarations, when they are allowed to be seen, to the satisfaction of the candid and unprejudiced, I will bear the blame for ever.

" The same day they lost no time, but had a short letter prepared to circulate through the nations, in case I did not make suitable acknowledgment of my offences, and engage to renounce what I had published. When I appeared at their bar and received the final sentence of expulsion, the preachers did it by their president, with all the gloom and silence of an inquisition. To make my expulsion secure, it was not only confirmed by the preachers standing up and unanimously agreeing to it, but every person was required to sign a paper with his own hand, of the *justness* and *uprightness* of their proceedings in that matter. The paper was taken to the communion table, and laid on the place where the memorials of the body and blood of Christ are presented every Sabbath-day, and Mr. Bradburn, [I cannot relate the tragical story without weeping] who had formerly professed himself a friend to liberty and the rights of the people; Mr. Bradburn, I say, stood by the rails of the Lord's table, like the governor of an inquisition, to see that all his brethren signed. Here we find about 150 preachers of the gospel of Christ, confirming the sentence of condemnation, in a way unheard of in the records of Methodism, if not in the records of ecclesiastical history. This is a sufficient proof, that the leading men in that process, considered what I had written (to enlighten and save our people from many evils that they groan beneath) as worse than any crime that had ever been examined in any former Conference.

"The letter they had prepared was instantly circulated. That night it was sent off by post to many places. After attacking the passions of the people, by a new account of my having injured the character of Mr. Wesley, they complain of my behaving with levity before them. Perhaps this will not appear in such a detestable light, when my readers are informed of the cause of my smiling. Soon after my examination was entered upon, a dispute took place among the preachers to know, whether I was trying them or they were trying me. Many arguments were brought forward to prove that I was their judge, and they were criminals before me. After a long dispute on the subject, a great majority of the Conference determined the point, and solemnly declared, I was trying them. This was so curious, when I was arraigned and brought from Alnwick in Northumberland, on purpose to be tried by them, that I could not help smiling. I told several of the preachers, if I were trying them, they ought to let me sit in the president's chair. The dispute was resumed the next day. Dr. Coke could not be reconciled to the idea of my trying them, when it was to be printed, and the people knew they had been trying me; therefore he altered the expression, and called the passages they had collected, Charges against me. A dispute took place upon the subject, which continued for some time, and was settled on the following terms. They called part of the list Charges which I had brought against them, and the other part Charges which they had brought against me. But, what may appear singular to many, out of the three charges they brought against me, only one stands: that is, the charge of making use of indecent expressions, which they have owned I acknowledged and sought their pardon for. They had charged me with *ignorance*, *impudence*, and *breach of trust*; and also with *lies*.—But these they wisely expunged from their list. Notwithstanding the second dispute on the subject, they have dropped the distinction in the account they have published. It seems they were conscious it would not hold good in the opinion of

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our people. Many things happened in the course of the trial, to keep me above melancholy. When I told the preachers that I was as happy as a prince at their bar, and had neither fear nor sorrow on account of what I had written in general, this was considered as a *demonstrative proof* of my want of piety, and I was reproved sharply for it. I ever declared to them, through the whole of the trial, if they would convince me I had acted contrary to the scriptures, then I would own my offences with sorrow before them. But till that was done, I should not make myself unhappy in their presence. Would it be possible to refrain from smiling, when above 100 Preachers of the Gospel disputed so warmly with each other, to know whether I was trying them, or they were trying me?— Are there not several things laughable in the charges they have brought against me? And was it not innocent to be chearful in their presence, when I was conscious of no considerable offence that they could lay to my charge? On the other hand, was it not right to be chearful, when I was conscious that the chief of my sufferings were occasioned by a *few persons*, who were angry with me, because I had exposed the corruptions of our Connexion to view, and had pleaded for the rights of the people? I did rejoice then, and do still rejoice, that I am accounted worthy to suffer for the sake of Jesus, and in pleading the cause of his followers.

"Every day during the Conference, several of the preachers urged me to acknowledge my offences, and to return to them with suitable penitence. But my constant anwer was this: I will chearfully confess any thing you shall convince me is wrong, but I cannot play the hypocrite, and feign myself sorrowful, when I feel a contrary principle in my heart.

"That nothing might be wanting on my part to meet the preachers, as far as I could with a good conscience, I wrote them the following letter:

To

To Mr. Thomas Taylor, President of the Conference.

London, 5th August, 1796.

" Dear Sir,

" You will greatly oblige me, by reading the following lines to the preachers, and returning me their answer, as soon as it is convenient.

" Ever since I came out to travel, I never had the least desire to leave the Connexion, but wished to spend and be spent in the work of the ministry. The circuits where I have travelled can bear witness, that I have not only endeavoured to preach according to the regular plan, but to publish the good tidings of salvation, in many new places.

" When I heard that my pamphlets had given great offence to many of the preachers, and that my expulsion was deemed necessary on that account, many can testify, that I always declared, should that be the case, I had no intention of attempting to head a party, or joining immediately, any community of Dissenters. It has been my fixed opinion for several months, and continues the same this moment, that the preachers will in due time be convinced, that I am neither a secret nor an open enemy to the cause of Methodism. If I have acted contrary to the views of many, it has been from *conviction of the importance of the steps which I have taken.* And if I have erred, it has been with a *design* so serve the Connexion at large. I have weighed all the charges brought against me with the greatest attention; and lest my own heart should deceive me, I have asked counsel of several very respectable friends; but after all, I cannot, without sacrificing my own principles, make any other acknowledgments than I have already made to you in the Conference, and in writing. If I had different views, you may depend on it, I would chearfully submit to their influence. It is probable, before another Conference return, our views on these subjects may be the
[illegible] We may then unite with thankfulness, to build
[illegible] ple of the Lord together.

" You

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"You alledge nothing against my moral character; yet you have cast me off, after allowing me one day to consider upon the subject.

"My dear wife chearfully sold her furniture, and parted with her house and friends, to be my companion in the work of the Lord. She has received no quarterage, the eight years we have been married. Every person acquainted with her, knows her value, and the care she has taken to make Methodism respectable, by her particular attention to domestic affairs. The day before we parted, by a fall from a horse, she sprained her foot, and has been incapable of walking ever since. Her confinement, together with her exercises of mind, have brought a return of her nervous disorder, which at present threatens her life. And yet you have not only cast me off, but her also. In her present afflicted state, she has not a place provided by you, where to lay her head. Nor have you made me an offer of any help, (except returning the money I have subscribed to the fund) till I can get into a situation to provide for my family, though I have been attempting to serve the Connexion with all my heart, in near twelve of the best years of my life. Does not common justice require that you should make some provision for me, till I can get into a place where my wants may be supplied? For, though my dear wife has a small fortune, yet she has an infirm mother to help, and it will be impossible to avoid having recourse to the principal in her present distress, except help be administered from some quarter. At present we are quite unfixed about our future abode. The Lord can direct our steps, where we shall have our wants amply supplied.

"But what I principally desire you to consider is this. If it were possible, I could wish to preach as much this year, as I have done in any former. But it is probable, this cannot be allowed. I should, however, wish to spend every Sabbath, in publishing the Gospel of the grace of God. I am determined still to consider myself a Methodist Preacher, and am resolved by the grace of God, for this year, to shew to the Connexion

Connexion at large, that I have still the interest of Methodism at heart. In consequence of this, (unless something very particular happen to alter my purpose) I shall join no sect or party of Dissenters, but consider myself the friend of all. Do you, my dear brethren, by expelling me from among yourselves, exclude me also from having a place among the local preachers? If this be the case, do you also expel me from the society? Or do you admit me to be a member of your community, and a local preacher? I shall wait your answer to this letter with a degree of anxiety, as a great deal depends on it to me and my family.

"Praying that God may direct you in all things,

"I remain, your affectionate servant,

ALEX. KILHAM.

"P. S. As you have printed your Account of the Trial several days since, I particularly request you to favour me with a copy of it. This request you might have granted as soon as it was printed, had you considered that you refused to give me a copy of the particulars of the Trial on the day of my expulsion, under the idea that I should soon see them in print.

"The next day I received the following short letter:

"Mr. Kilham, Sir, *London, Aug.* 8, 1796.

"I am ordered by the Conference to inform you, that your letter was read this afternoon, in a full meeting. We are concerned that your wife, or yourself should suffer any thing, especially as we consider your sufferings as the effect of your imprudence.

"If you wished your letter to be understood as an acknowledgment of your fault, and as a step toward any future explanation, a few of the preachers shall be authorized to meet and converse with you.

"I am, Sir, on behalf of the Conference,

"Your's, &c. S. BRADBURN."

"Instead of this being any answer to my letter, it evades entering upon any particulars in it. From the beginning I have offered to acknowledge any fault they could prove me guilty of. But no person can justly

imagine, that I meant the letter referred to as a confession of any thing further than is declared in it. That my mind might be fully known to the Conference, I sent them the following letter, a few hours after I had received theirs:

To Mr. Taylor, President of the Conference.

" Dear Sir, *London, 8th August,* 1796.

" I have just received Mr. Bradburn's letter, written in behalf of the Conference, and intreat you to read to the preachers the following lines.

" As far as I am convinced of erring, so far I am willing to own my offence. God is my witness, I would sacrifice every thing that the Lord Jesus requires, to give you the right hand of fellowship.—I will not take up much of your time in giving my sentiments freely on the subject.

" According to my views, our people are prevented from having a suitable share in our government. I wrote the Progress of Liberty to attack what I thought wrong in our system as it referred to rules and laws of discipline. I cannot, after mature deliberation, suppose, that what I have published injures the character of Mr. Wesley—the characters of the preachers in general, or of any respectable individuals. On the contrary, I think I have treated Mr. Wesley's memory with respect; and have shown that a majority of the Conference *abhor* the evils complained of. But if the preachers *in general* suppose themselves injured by what I published, I am sorry for it, and solemnly declare, it was never my intention to injure any of them. If any of our friends or others have drawn wrong inferences from what I have written, and are led to brand the preachers *in general,* as a set of designing wicked men, *I detest their inferences,* and declare, nothing could be more foreign to my design. If you add to what I have now named, the acknowledgment I have made of unjustifiable expressions, in some parts of my pamphlets, I think you cannot justly suppose, I had any thoughts of injuring the characters of the preachers.

" If

"If this acknowledgment be sufficient to satisfy the Conference, I will engage to conform to the rules of our body in every thing, as far as I am convinced they are *agreeable* to the scriptures of truth. If you admit me again to my place in the Connexion, I suppose the preachers will have no objection to my conforming to general custom."—After mentioning in several particulars, how he should act in the receiving or excluding members, &c. &c. he adds, "If what I have now said be satisfactory, I shall be thankful, (with or without a friend) at any hour most convenient for you this afternoon, to meet a committee of the preachers.

I am your affectionate servant, A. K.

Mr. Kilham hearing nothing on Saturday, wrote again on Sunday, earnestly begging for the copy of the charges preferred against him, and on Monday the 8th, a committee was appointed by Conference to meet him. After determining that he should meet them *alone;* they informed him, that they meant to adhere strictly to the *rules of pacification*—that they as individuals *disapproved of many things in them as much as himself*, yet they submitted to them! And, that he must, if he returned, submit implicitly to them, without any proviso, whether they were conformable to the Scriptures or not!!—That he must not speak nor write *even to a friend* in private against them upon any account whatever!—Mr. K. very properly replied, "It is in vain to attempt to bind me to such an *abject submission*†. Mr. Bradburn then said, as submission to the rules of pacification was the least of many things which they had to propose to me, it was unnecessary to proceed. I told them it appeared very singular, they should wish to bind me to those rules without

† Who is there that has any degree of even Heathen honesty—who is there that has any regard for Christian sincerity, or any detestation of hypocrisy—who is there that enjoys and knows how to appreciate fairly the invaluable blessings of British freedom, but must with indignant abhorrence reject such disgraceful propofals? Nay, more, who could have believed that Methodist Preachers, who call themselves Christians, would have made them?

any condition, when they acknowledged, that they did not approve of them in their own judgment; especially as they hinted that they were to be fixed and established for ever. Upon this they parted—but still he could obtain no copy of the Trial, till it was publicly sold at the book-room.

Mr. Kilham, immediately after his expulsion, wrote letters to his friends in different parts, requesting their advice respecting his future proceedings; whether he should sit down to one congregation, or continue to preach where an open door presented itself. "*It appears to our friends in London*, (he writes in a letter to Leeds, dated August 1, 1796) *that the latter would be the most excellent way, at least for one year; and then if the Conference continue obstinate in keeping me out of connexion, and will retain the grievances complained of, we shall have no reason to condemn ourselves with acting rashly in these matters. I am neither sorrowful nor cast down.—May God help you, and bless you*," &c.

The general answers to his enquiry coincided with the sentiments of the friends assembled in London, and he followed their advice, *to continue disengaged from all individual congregations, and preach throughout the Connexion wherever an opportunity presented.* During this year of vacation, he followed the advice of his friends, and published the Methodist Monitor, which contains many excellent pieces upon Christian candour and liberality as well as occasional pieces upon the past and present state of the Methodist Connexion.

It was during this same year, while he was confined in Lancashire on account of his wife's affliction, that some friends apprehending that a Division might be the consequence of the present convulsion, wrote to him to ask his opinion about the propriety of a subscription fund being made, to encourage the preachers that were friendly to a reformation, to come forwards and assist in the establishment of a new Itinerancy. Mr. K. returned an answer, *I disapprove of it altogether—I yet hope that a division will be prevented; but*

but whatever be the issue, if the Preachers will not act from the conviction of their own minds, the Lord will provide. I am determined never to countenance the holding out of a golden bait to allure them. Shall we make the love of filthy lucre our condemnation? Let us put our confidence in Jehovah, pursue the paths of uprightness, and all shall be well.

About eight or ten weeks before Conference, 1797, Mr. K. seemed for the first time to suppose that a division was inevitable. He had always fondly hoped that time and reflection would mollify the rigidity of the leading preachers. Far, however, were his hopes from being realized; their feelings grew more callous, their spirits more violent, and their determinations to crush him more unalterably firm.

After Mr. K. had published an account of his Trial, (if such an inquisitorial transaction can be called a Trial, where the *Accusers* were both *Judges*, *Jury*, and *Executioners)* a pamphlet was published by Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson, in vindication of the conduct of Conference. This caused Mr. K. again to publish, *A Defence of the Account of his Trial*, in which he defends himself from their charges, accusations, &c. to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced mind. "They seemed assiduous, (said Mr. K.) to keep the main point out of sight, and raise up a host of imaginary foes of their own creation to combat." They drag *Thomas Paine and his writings* into connection with *Alexander Kilham and his mushroom productions*, in order if possible to involve the latter in the national odium which overwhelmed the former. Vastly generous indeed!—Such as are not acquainted with the merit and demerit of each, would do well to examine both the one and the other, and judge for themselves.

I cannot forbear to quote the conclusion of this defence of his Trial, which, if words have any import, infallibly prove that Mr. K. had no design of dividing the people, nor aggrandizing himself:—"The latter part of this pamphlet (meaning Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson's) I cordially agree to,

and

and wish it may be engraven on all our hearts.—Whatever any person thinks to the contrary, I would a thousand times sooner see the Methodists united on a liberal plan, than behold them disunited in sentiments and affections, or than see the Connexion rent in twain. If this would be accomplished by my retiring into obscurity, or leaving Europe, I would chearfully submit to it for the general good."

During this year, the Connexion was much agitated, and when the time of Conference (1797) arrived, a considerable number of delegates assembled. Such as were favourable to a reform, assembled occasionally in Ebenezer-Chapel, Leeds, to explain and converse upon the nature of their delegations, &c. Many of them were positively enjoined to submit to no reconciliation unless the reception of Mr. K. into Connexion, or a new Trial before a jury of the people, was made one of the fundamental and leading articles in their terms. When Mr. K. heard them read, he earnestly requested of them, that his re-admission might form no part of their solicitude. And when the proposals were drawing out by the delegates to be presented to the preachers in Conference, again Mr. Kilham came forward, and begged for their own sakes, that his restoration might form no part in the articles of negociation. "*I have* (said he) *no private advantage in research*, 'tis the public good of the Methodist Connexion for which I have laboured.—If a radical reform be but obtained, my utmost wishes are fulfilled."

They complied with Mr. Kilham's desires, and used every means of qualifying and softening their requests, of having, as representatives of the people, a share in the making laws, &c. for the Methodist body. When they were denied a place in the Conference, they solicited to be allowed to meet in a separate room, and this also was obstinately rejected. In a word, the preachers determined to continue *sole* and *whole* masters, and not suffer the people to have any voice in the making of laws by which they must be governed; in the distribution of the money which they had contributed—

tributed—or the choice of the officers of the church. No alternative was left, but to sound a retreat, or tamely submit to the perpetuation of evils, under which many had long groaned, and many more condemned.

From this plain statement, let the impartial say, who were the cause of the Division? The people, in claims which reason and revelation approve, and example justifies—or the preachers, in ——————; but I stop—my feelings have been so often and painfully harrowed up by the reflection, that I forbear the recital, and wish to forget it for ever!

The Division being now formed, I have no design to trouble our friends any farther; the Life furnishes every satisfactory information. Shall therefore conclude with a few reflections:—

1. Be it remembered, that when I speak of the Conference of the Old Connexion, I by no means involve all the members of it in one general censure. The business of it is, I believe, generally transacted by a few leading men, who by some abilities and much assurance, have obtained, and are determined to hold the reins of government, either till the people wrest them from their hands, or all-subduing death cause them to relax their grasp. These ruling few are abetted by a number of others, attached to their cause from various motives that might easily be mentioned. The rest are mere cyphers in Methodistical politics. I do not say that these last are contemptible characters—No; I should and do believe them the most thinking, virtuous, and useful part of the preachers; but unhappily these qualifications are not always accompanied with the necessary share of firmness, courage, and resolution. Besides, these leading few are now and then hurling their darts, by way of example, against characters like Kilham, who dare to tell them the truth to their faces, and manage to keep the remainder in subjection and obedience. It was this that made many sign Mr. Kilham's expulsion, who would otherwise not have done it. But 'tis possible that a few persons as hardy as themselves, may one day or other rise out of obscurity, and repay the

the indignities, which they have made others to suffer, into their own bosoms, perhaps both in value and kind.

2. The disgraceful epithets which have been made more than once to serve a bad cause, will sooner or later stand exposed in their genuine colours. Such as the artful but hateful insinuations, that Kilham and his friends were influenced by the same political motives as Thomas Paine, &c. Language cannot express my destestation of such wretched, mean, shabby, vile, uncharitable, dishonourable, and unchristian proceedings. These sorry shifts, however, are but, in point of advantage, ephemeras of a day.

3. I have endeavoured for the sake of the present and future generations, to point out the leading traits of the late Mr. Kilham's character and conduct, in respect to the part he acted amongst the people called Methodists. And I challenge all the world to prove the assertion just, that Mr. K. was ambitiously determined to divide the Methodists, and make himself the head. So far from it, he laboured with might and main, and condescended as far as he could with a good conscience, in order to prevent it. He endeavoured so long as endeavours would avail, to avoid it; and when all exertions became useless, he then, and *not till then* yielded.

Every one who knew Mr. Kilham intimately, will acquit him of ambition: He claimed no superiority in the New Connexion §. His simplicity and plainness of manners and appearance, have at first sight astonished several, who before knew him only from his writings. And the many proofs adduced in the foregoing part of these pages, will be an incontrovertible testimony in behalf of a much injured and misrepresented man.

4. Mr. K. has been accused of too much levity in his remarks, and severity in his observations upon certain persons and characters. The plain meaning of which

§ From whatever motive the name of KILHAMITES is applied to the Methodists of the New Itinerancy, it is equally improper and unjust.—It is *improper*, because he never was the head of them, nor possessed any power more than his brethren; and *unjust*, because he never desired it.

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is, that his honest freedom has offended the (shall I say?) pride of certain persons and characters. The man is in my opinion below a man, who dares not admonish, reprove and oppose his fellow-mortals, his fellow-worms, where his conscience enjoins it as a duty. And the man is positively below a Christian, whose ire shall boil over into bulls and expulsions, alias excommunications, when truths *too* plain, and common sense *too* glaring, dare to confront his corruptions, and unmask his vanity.

Be it, however, granted, that Mr. Kilham was guilty of these charges of *levity* and *severity*, before we pass a final sentence, we should endeavour to find out the criminal's past and present state of mind. Mr. K. acknowledged the fault again and again; but perhaps he did not fall down at their feet, therefore could not be pardoned. Where is that wisdom that is easy to be entreated?

Mr. Kilham's natural temper inclined him, almost in spite of himself, to frequent sallies of keenness and satire; but generally fraught with good humour and chearfulness. Such being the man's natural bias, no wonder that a spice of it should appear in his writings—nay, greater the wonder that there was no more. But be it remembered, that a sarcastic jeer, and a jocular censure, were a thousand times more tolerable in a man of his manners, than they would have been in a person characterized by a haughty look, or a malignant gloom. In the one they may be *misfortunes*, in the other *faults*—in the one the *foam of the waves*, in the other the *poison of asps*—in the one a *dagger of pendant icicles*, but in the other of *burnished steel*.

Mr. Kilham has been accused even by some of his own friends, of not being as *calmly prudent* as his situation required; but *calmly prudent* is amongst many but another name for *craftily artful*, which was as foreign from his mind, as hell from heaven.—Witness, amongst numberless instances, the generous and noble spirit which he displayed upon the proposal of a fund for the sake of biassing the preachers.—

Such

Such was Alexander Kilham, at least in my views of him; they were formed at first from his writings, and intimate acquaintance never afterward caused me to change them. He is entered into rest, *and shall stand in his lot at the end of days*

Such are my views also of the conduct of the leaders, abettors, and expectants, in that body of people called the Methodist Conference. I make no apology for plainness towards them. *I know not*, said Elihu, *how to accept any man's person, nor yet how to give flattering titles unto man.* We are worms, inhabitants of one common sod—children of one common parent—and must appear before one common and impartial Judge. If any hints respecting the probable consequences of retaining those abuses of which we have ineffectually complained, should be of any service towards the application of a timely remedy, I should be glad; but of this as yet, I have not a glimpse of hope. However, I trust our friends will press forward to *the one thing needful*, and each discharge his duty faithfully in every relation in which he stands. May humility and zeal be bestowed upon all our Ministers; and may bigotry, priestcraft, and every species and desire of persecution be unknown amongst us through unborn ages.

The Committee of the Book-Room are sorry to say, that in Mr. Kilham's Life, there are a few Errors which have created complaint: for instance, The pamphlets at Liverpool were "buried in the earth," (Life, page 114) is not *entirely* just: But though they were "not buried in the earth," 'tis a positive fact, "that they were secreted," no matter whether in a cupboard or a garden. When we consider, that Mr. Kilham entered the occurrences daily in his Journal as they came to his ears, we are not surprised at some trifling mistakes of that kind. The ferment of the moment produced the mis-statement, but we are confident, that neither Mr. Kilham, nor the transcribers intended any deception. There is *truth enough* in all conscience without it.—We also suppose a letter, (Life, page 196) signed J. Grant, should have been J. Riles.

We have only to add, that the price of Two Shillings and Sixpence in the title page, was inserted without due reflection.—The price of the Life and Sequel we have now fixed at "Two Shillings."

[*Binns & Brown, Printers*]